

JAN 26 2022

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ATHLETICS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that University of Hawaii
2 athletics is a significant cultural aspect to Hawaii's people.
3 The University of Hawaii football team began in 1909, and the
4 program has remained as one of the university's signature
5 programs. Since its inception, the football program has
6 achieved great success throughout the years, including a record
7 undefeated season that brought the rainbow warriors to the sugar
8 bowl in 2008. The University of Hawaii football program has
9 captivated the people of Hawaii for decades, becoming a major
10 icon for the State.

11 As leaders of their respective programs, head coaches serve
12 as an impactful, influential figure for student athletes. To
13 some student athletes, head coaches can become parental figures
14 who provide mentorship and look after player mental health and
15 well-being. In comparison to the student-faculty rapport, the
16 connection and rapport between head coaches and student athletes
17 continues to grow through camaraderie and the bond formed in



1 competitive sports. Beyond graduation and departure from the
2 team, many coaches maintain relationships with former players
3 and their families. The strong connections between players and
4 coaches, along with the culture within the University of Hawaii
5 athletic department, creates a unique community to all who are
6 involved in collegiate athletics.

7 From December 2021 to January 2022, at least eighteen
8 warrior football players declared their intent to enter the
9 transfer portal. The high number of players entering the portal
10 was unusual, as more than a dozen scholarship players, team
11 captains, and starting lineup members departed from the team.

12 In December 2021, allegations of mistreatment surfaced
13 against former head coach Todd Graham. In an anonymous social
14 media forum, current and former players raised concerns that
15 Graham mistreated players and showed little respect for the
16 culture in Hawaii. Combined with the growing number of players
17 in the transfer portal, the cultural issues within the football
18 program warranted further investigation.

19 The legislature further finds that the difficulties faced
20 by the University of Hawaii football team became a matter of
21 statewide concern. As the football program is a significant



1 revenue generator for the university and its athletic programs,
2 the senate ways and means and higher education committees called
3 an informational briefing to discuss the budget and costs
4 related to coaching staff contracts and issues surrounding the
5 transfer of players. Compelled by constituent concerns, the
6 senate committees held the hearing to learn more about the
7 criticism and allegations regarding the football program and the
8 athletic department from university administrators. Following
9 the senate hearing, university administrators committed to
10 improve communication and culture within the program.

11 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to enable the Board
12 of Regents to terminate the athletic director and head coaches
13 for cause and to be required to approve contracts for coaching
14 staff at four-year campuses with salaries greater than \$200,000,
15 including private funding and bonuses.

16 SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
18 and to read as follows:

19 "§304A- Athletic staff and coaches; contracts. (a) The
20 board of regents shall have the authority to terminate the



1 athletic director and head coaches of the athletic department at
2 four-year campuses, for cause.

3 (b) The board of regents shall be required to approve all
4 coaching contracts at four-year campuses with salaries greater
5 than \$200,000. For purposes of this section, "salary" shall
6 include bonuses and private funding."

7 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

8 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

9

INTRODUCED BY: *Anna Mercedes Kiri*



S.B. NO. 3268

Report Title:

University of Hawaii; Board of Regents; Athletic Director;
Coaches; Contracts; Salaries; Termination

Description:

Authorizes the University of Hawaii Board of Regents to terminate the Athletic Director and head coaches at four-year campuses for cause. Requires the Board of Regents to approve all coaching contracts at four-year campuses with salaries greater than \$200,000, including additional private funding and bonuses.

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